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Title: Social Capital and Network Building for Enterprise in Rural Areas: Can Festivals and Special Events Contribute?

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Abstract

Objectives

This paper explores social capital and network building in rural areas, its importance in enterprise creation and development, and the role which festivals and events can thus play in this process.

Prior Work

Previous work has highlighted that social capital and networking can be important factors in entrepreneurship (both general and social enterprise related) activities and their success (e.g. Davidsson and Honig, 2003). Rural areas have traditionally been seen as having a relative dearth of these on which to build, creating a perceived need for policy in this area to create the conditions for effective social capital and network building (Senyard et al, 2007). In addition, there is considerable evidence of entrepreneurial families acting as 'catalysts in the rural wealth creation process, positively contributing social and financial capital to rural and peripheral communities and local economies' (Morrison 2006). As part of this, small tourist firms in rural areas often 'strive to put something back' into their communities, helping to create additional social capital, and they can also be 'adept and agile in the face of crises' such as Foot and Mouth. Also Sharpley (2003) argues that the in the UK countryside tourism has become a more powerful force than agriculture and that sustainable countryside policy and financial support must therefore be adjusted to account for this change.

Approach

The issues surrounding social capital and network building as they apply to rural areas, entrepreneurship and social enterprise are outlined. The potential use of festivals and events in this process is then explored, both in the literature, and then using a survey of the activities of the 22 unitary authorities in Wales regarding festivals and events.

Results

The results highlight that the vast majority of festivals and events are local in scope, and strongly focus on social capital building. They are also strongly correlated with self employment and rurality. In terms of resourcing there is evidence that local (entrepreneurial) resources are supplementing or replacing those from unitary authorities so supporting the notion that social capital and entrepreneurial activity in rural areas are mutually supportive activities.

Implications

Implications include the need to evaluate festivals and events in more sophisticated ways than the traditional economic impact or marketing focus. In this way it may be possible to develop approaches to maximise the social capital building aspects which are most suited to social and general entrepreneurial activity.

Value

The value is that festivals and events in the rural periphery do have the capacity to make significant contribution to the social capital of their communities, and through this, to entrepreneurial activities generally.

Key words: Social capital, networks, social, enterprise, festivals, events.

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Introduction

Rural entrepreneurs have to deal with the effects of rurality on the entrepreneurial process (Whittaker *et al.*, 1999; Parker, 1998). The main difficulties facing these businesses are location specific but often include isolation, lack of basic business services, and time management problems caused by social/family care commitments (Warren-Smith, 1999; Jackson, 2000; and Warren-Smith and Jackson, 2004). Rural areas are by their nature remote (Reid, 1987) with low population and there is some evidence that economically this inhibits rural business creation (Salazar 2004).

Stathopoulou *et al* (2004) argue that a growing number of rural enterprises **choose** to develop or maintain lifestyle firms which focus on lifestyle factors rather than traditional rationales of profit maximisation and growth found in mainstream economic theory. This may be inextricably linked to the tourist-focused nature of many rural businesses. For example, early UK studies undertaken in Scarborough (Stallinbrass 1980), Dorset (Brown 1987) and Cornwall (Shaw and Williams 1987) (all cited in Shaw and Williams 2002) also supported claims that tourism entrepreneurs often lacked expertise and experience, took advantage of low capital entry costs by relying on family savings, and were motivated by location and environmental factors, such as 'wanting to live in Cornwall' or 'a desire for a better way of life'. The Cornwall study discovered that 80% of hotel respondents were in-migrants and this can be supported by research on rural tourism in Australia (Getz and Carlsen 2000) found that 50% of study respondents had no formal business goals. These factors are likely to be influential on the ability of the tourism sector to integrate successfully with the wider local economy. Despite the relatively sparse, though growing, research on entrepreneurship in the tourism sector its value for backward linkages and supporting local economies is clearly its key potential. Indeed, Shaw and Williams (2002:164) argue that 'the performance of local entrepreneurs holds the key to strengthening and spreading the benefits from tourism in many developed and developing areas' contributing to sustainable tourism development.

However, recent work (Salazar 2004) suggests that shifts in consumer preferences have also created new opportunities for rural entrepreneurs with the internet increasing access to target and actual markets for products with a rural origin. Consumer preferences for regionally branded organic fruits and vegetables or organically fed animals, for example, have increased potential for venture creation and development (Richards, 2002). In 'A Strategy For Rural Tourism in England 2001-2005' the English Tourism Council and The Countryside Agency identified sixteen priorities for action, one of which was 'promoting local produce and gastronomy'. In furtherance of this strategic aim the Countryside Agency launched a campaign in 2000 called 'Eat the View: Promoting sustainable local produce' which sought to highlight the link between the food people buy and the countryside they visit. It has been argued that food culture may be particularly relevant to the development of rural tourism with its apparent inherent potential for 'sustainable' forms of development (Beer *et al* 2002:207). Such high level strategic aims make it clear that tourism linked to food is being promoted as a prime source of economic development for rural England.

The value of tourism as a stimulant to economic development has thus been one of the key reasons for the growth of the tourism industry in both developed and developing countries around the world (Cooper *et al.* 2005:4). Despite this significant growth of the tourism industry in the second half of the last century there is, however, still little agreement as to the exact nature of its role in economic development (Shaw and Williams 2002:145), the tourism industry comprising, as it does, of a range of very large and very small public, private and voluntary sector providers. Nevertheless, It is claimed, , that small-medium enterprises (SMEs), are the backbone of the tourist industry (Morrison and Thomas 1999). It should be recognised however, that the commercial structure of the industry and general economic power structures will inevitably influence the performance of the tourism industry in any given setting (Smeral 1998). Given the growth of tourism and the importance of economic structures there is, at least by

implication, potential for a supporting role for culture and special events in economic development and entrepreneurship. Cultural regeneration models, as illustrated for a range of European cities (Bianchini & Parkinson, 1993; Kotler, Asplund, Rein, & Haider, 1999) are vital to this process, highlighting how culture can help create identity, support local requirements, and promote the area more widely. Increasingly, therefore, temporally limited events, including festivals are seen as important drivers and components of location's portfolio of tourism products (Ryan 1998) which can also contribute significantly to driving economic development and diversity in a region (Hanssan, 2000; Long et al, 1990; McDonnell et al, 1999). In addition, there is a growing support for the claim for economic benefits to be derived from visitors to specific events at destinations (see Kasimati 2003; Brown et al., 2002; Crompton et al., 2001; Tyrrell and Johnston 2001; Getz 1994; Long and Perdue 1990).

Governments recognise that festivals and special events also provide the local community with more than just direct economic returns (Wood 2005). Festivals are also created to achieve a myriad of outcomes including attracting visitors and tourism, but also wider objectives. These often include education, community building, a forum to promote and provide information on government programmes, increased social capital and social inclusion within the community, and positive local impacts of art and culture, creativity and quality of life for the residents (Ferres and Adair, 2005). For rural areas in particular, therefore, government-sponsored/supported actions and networking in this area may be significant in overcoming problems of rurality and smallness via providing a purpose to visit end targets and to provide a social forum for coordinated action amongst members of the local rural community. When festivals and special events are developed with cultural and social objectives in mind, however, there are challenges in actually defining and then measuring and evaluating the specific impacts (Fredline and Faulkner 2002), creating a challenge for policymakers and a research area for academics.

Thus, there are limitations imposed by rurality, for both business and community, created by remoteness, social isolation, skills, access to support, and so on. Simultaneously there are also pull factors to the rural economy created by trends in counter urbanisation and population shift, increased importance of leisure and tourism related activities, and easier access to some markets generated by the internet (Bosworth 2006). Festivals and Special Events (FaSPE) also potentially offer both social and economic development opportunities for rural areas, but currently there is a dearth of research in this area. There is an issue here for rural areas then, with regard to, examining the role of festivals and special events and the linkages they may have with social capital and network building for enterprise. This paper considers the issues surrounding the rural economy, particularly social/network capital building and entrepreneurship, and the potential role of festivals and events in these processes. The actual role of festivals and events in Wales are explored using a survey of all 22 unitary authorities in this nation within the United Kingdom. Finally the implications of these results are discussed and an agenda for further research established.

The Rural Economy

Given that rural entrepreneurship exists in the context of the wider rural economy, it is worth noting some of its key aspects as illustrated in the tables below for the rural areas of Great Britain and also the case study nation of Wales.

Table 1: General Economic Statistics (GB, Rural GB, Wales, Rural Wales)

	Great Britain	Rural Great Britain	Wales	Rural Wales
	percent	percent	percent	percent
Employment rate - working age	74.3	78.9	70.5	71.7
Employment rate males - working age	78.9	83.3	74.0	74.8
Employment rate females - working age	69.5	74.3	66.7	68.3
% who are economically inactive - working age	21.8	18.2	25.8	24.9
% in employment who are employees - 16+	86.7	84.0	86.6	79.6
% of males in employment who are employees - 16+	82.4	79.2	82.0	72.8
% of females in employment who are employees - 16+	91.8	89.5	91.8	87.4
% in employment who are employees - working age	87.3	84.8	87.4	80.9
% in employment who are self-employed - working age	12.1	14.6	11.9	18.2
% in employment working fulltime - working age	75.5	73.1	75.3	73.7
% in employment working part-time - working age	24.5	26.9	24.7	26.3
% with NVQ4+ - working age	25.2	25.9	22.5	23.7
% with NVQ3 - working age	14.7	15.2	14.3	14.6
Economic activity rate - working age	78.2	81.8	74.2	75.1
Economic activity rate males - working age	83.4	86.5	78.6	79.0
Economic activity rate females - working age	72.8	76.9	69.6	70.9
% all in employment who work in - agriculture and fishing	1.2	2.4	2.1	5.5
% all in employment who work in - energy and water	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.3
% all in employment who work in - manufacturing	14.3	14.5	15.8	11.1
% all in employment who work in - construction	7.5	8.0	8.1	9.4
% all in employment who work in - distribution, hotels and restaurants	20.1	21.0	19.9	21.5
% all in employment who work in - transport and communications	6.8	6.3	5.6	5.5
% all in employment who work in - banking, finance and insurance	15.6	13.9	10.3	8.5
% all in employment who work in - public admin., education and health	27.1	26.6	30.9	30.8
% all in employment who work in - other services	6.1	6.2	6.0	6.3

Note: Rural Wales defined according to Rural Development Plan for Wales 2000-2006 (National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff) as predominantly rural unitary authorities of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Powys, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Monmouthshire
 Figures for employment include self employment

Source: Local area labour force survey (March 2003-February 2004)

The table shows that in rural Wales and Great Britain, self employment is relatively significant, as is part-time, agricultural, distribution, hotels and restaurant (tourist-related activities), and public sector employment. Overall, the statistics reveal rural Wales to display characteristics of typical rural economies in their relative reliance on agriculture and tourism-related activities, part-time and self-employment. Direct employment is further restricted by a relative lack of access to traditional male dominated industries such as manufacturing. Whilst manufacturing still accounts for more than 10% of employment, this is only around a third of the employment found in the public services in Welsh rural areas. Whilst unemployment rates in rural areas tend to be lower than the national average (Hodge, 1999; Parsons, 1999), this is often accompanied, however, by relatively low wage levels and high seasonal employment (Hodge, 1999; Countryside Agency, 2003), even where the structure of rural employment has moved significantly away from agriculture, because of the development of the private employment market in tourism. A number of recent studies on firm formation (Atleljevic and Doorne 2000; Social Capital and Network Building for Enterprise in Rural Areas: Can Festivals and Special Events Contribute?

Dahles and Bras 1999) and Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in tourism (Morrison and Thomas 2004) also suggest, that in both traditional and recent areas of tourism development, the nature and quality of the local business culture remains a critical factor for success. Indeed, theories expounded most recently by Russell and Faulkner (2004) argue that successful tourism development depends on entrepreneurs capitalising on opportunities offered by the chaos and turbulence common within the highly complex system that is tourism in rural areas.

There is also a clear issue of economic inactivity in rural Wales which, whilst lower than for Wales as a whole, is significantly higher than for Great Britain as a whole and rural Great Britain in particular. This highlights a need, therefore, to widen the variety of employment opportunities available in rural Wales in general, within which increasing (already relatively high) self-employment through entrepreneurship-focused policies is likely to play a part. Warren-Smith and Jackson (2004) found, for example, that the perceived need to encourage rural entrepreneurship more generally in the UK has led to a plethora of government-funded (small) business support mechanisms in the form of Rural Development Agencies, Business Link/Training Enterprise Councils and other associations. This has been done in a very 'top down' way (Lowe *et al.* 1998; Welsh Assembly Government 2004), with solutions and initiatives often imposed from outside the areas where development is required. Government policy in Wales, however, supported by European Union (EU) Objective One resources, has become increasingly focused on encouraging entrepreneurial solutions derived from local individuals, firms and communities (Brooksbank *et al.* 2001). This is particularly pertinent to the rural economy which has clear opportunities in terms of economic development (Bristow, 2000). The EU has attempted to promote economic sustainability, diversification and development of rural areas through agricultural policy, EU Structural Funds, strengthening rural development policies, international trade liberalisation, processes of globalisation, technological change and localisation (Lowe *et al.* 2002, Stathopoulou *et al.* 2004). Further, Stathopoulou (2004) argues that rural economies require restructuring and reform which agricultural policies alone, notably the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, cannot ensure. This is even more apparent in peripheral rural areas, characterised by depopulation and a fractured social fabric, infrastructure problems, high relative dependence on agriculture, and vulnerability to economic adjustment processes (Stathopoulou *et al.* 2004).

Despite efforts to encourage enterprise a paucity of research exists on the performance of programmes designed to assist rural entrepreneurs (Chrisman *et al.* 2002). Given its social significance argues Ray (1999) research should shift its focus onto territories in rural locations, marginalised social groups living in rural locations and the differences that exist between rural and urban enterprises (Smallbone *et al.* 2002; Countryside Commission, 2003). Murdoch (2000), for example, claims that it is often more difficult to get new networks off the ground in remote rural areas compared with more urban locations. This may be of importance because, as Malecki (2003) explains, networks encourage greater interaction amongst entrepreneurs, and between entrepreneurs and public sector bodies. Further, social capital and networking can be important factors in entrepreneurship (both general and social enterprise related) activities and their success (see Davidsson and Honig, 2003). This is because networks of firms can offer stable information sources about market relationships that entrepreneurs can then utilise for competitive advantage generally (Klang *et al.* 2002) with the most successful being those that can utilise the information and its sources most efficiently (Petch 2000).

The Importance of Social Capital and Networks

Popularised in the 1990s by Putnam (1993) social capital has its earlier intellectual origins and has pursued several conceptual strands or schools of thought (Woolcock, 1998). Regardless of the level of operation or the perspective adopted, at its most basic level social capital refers to the ability to leverage advantage from the relationships between people or, as Lin (1991:28) describes it, the 'assets in networks'. Such a conceptualisation focuses attention on two areas (a) the relational elements of trust, norms, shared values and reciprocity (Putnam, 1993) and (b) the strength and structure of the relationship networks that evolve (Lin, 1999). Two key breaks in conceptualisation are also apparent in the literature in terms of the focus on: (a) individual beneficiaries and (b) collective beneficiaries. The first focuses attention on the accumulation and application of social capital by individuals. From this perspective, social capital

is similar to human capital in that it is assumed that such investments can be made by individuals with expected returns (Lin, 1999). The social capital proposition is that better connected people do better (Burt 2000). By contrast, the second view puts the emphasis on, (1) how certain groups develop and maintain social capital as a collective asset and (2) how such an asset enhances group members' capacity and quality of life (Bourdieu, 1983, 1986, 1980; Coleman, 1988, 1990), in ways which bond, bridge and link individuals and communities (Woolcock, 1998). The building of strong, collaborative relationships enables the accomplishment of tasks and activities that might not otherwise be achieved through conventional ways of working (Keast et al, 2004; Putnam 1993), playing a bridging role in community capacity building work and helping to link both within and between communities. Keast and Brown (2002) highlight that these processes, if developed over the longer term, produce an ongoing and sustained social infrastructure, which they describe as network capital - that is, the residual knowledge, skills and facilities retained by a network after an intervention has passed (capacity building). Along a similar line, Wellman and Franck (2001) define network capital as interpersonal ties and personal network /tie characteristics which are important predictors of supportive behaviour. Thus, network capital differs from social capital, in that it moved beyond the relationships and begins to embed resources, knowledge and learning into the community. In addition Keast et al (2004) also suggest that interventions (of which festivals and events could be seen as one type) can provide residual (social) infrastructure via capacity building that can be mobilised at a later time. Also, that neighbouring communities can "borrow" from the social capital generated (Keast, Guneskara and Brown, 2006) via, for example, festivals and special events. This can also be seen as important from the point of view of SMEs associated with such cultural activities given that collaboration, and thus social capital, are also important to their activities (see, for example, Cooke et al, 2004).

Collaboration between SMEs on certain business functions or sharing non-confidential knowledge can reduce barriers caused by small size in a relatively costless manner through a four step process (Cooke et al, 2004):

- Integrity - by activating reputational resources associated with membership of a professional association;
- Integration - continued community benefits at low or no cost, deriving from embeddedness but activated through expressing autonomy;
- Linkage - membership of local and non-local networks by virtue of assets deemed to be of consequence to the interests of these;
- Synergy – capabilities to link also to governance bodies, including government programmes and policies.

In this way, localised social capital building, networking and attendant aspects provide a starting point or a platform for the development of regional enterprises.

Festivals and Events as Social Enterprises

Unsurprisingly, therefore, Murdoch (2000) has explored the use of such networks as a new paradigm for rural development. Supporters of this approach however, argue that it will require significant changes in government policy towards "soft infrastructure" (Landabaso et al., 1999) and relationship building but note that such co-ordinated activities have proved difficult in the past (Bristow, 2000). Murdoch (2000) proposes in such circumstances where network types vary that strategies be adjusted to the requirements of specific rural areas. It is in this context, therefore, that the role of festivals and events may play an important networking and social capital building role, rather than the basic direct economic returns through tourist-related activity with which they have traditionally been credited. with.

Social capital building can be seen as of particular relevance to the development of social enterprises and festivals and special events organisations can provide examples of social enterprises where they provide organisation, coordination, and participation by local stakeholder groups for reasons other than solely profit-based ones. The UK's Countryside Agency (2003) recognises that social enterprise may also be important both directly in encouraging entrepreneurship and indirectly in assisting the development and diversification of the rural economy. The value of social entrepreneurship in community development is established

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through the achievement of the double bottom line (both social (mission) and financial (make money) objectives (Pomerantz 2004)), where social mission is explicit and central (Dees et al, 1998). This has expanded within the UK since the 1990s (Shaw, 2004), as social enterprises have been identified as potential developers and deliverers of innovative ways of tackling problems unresolved by traditional public, voluntary or community mechanisms (Leadbetter, 1997; Shaw, 2004). In some quarters, social entrepreneurship is being seen as a virtual panacea to the delivery of some social services Dart (2004). Thompson (2002), in particular, illustrates the blurred, overlapping nature of the main activities (between social and entrepreneurial activities), of 'help', 'volunteering', 'job creation' and 'utilisation of buildings'. This blurring extends to definitions of the social enterprise (SE) and its creation of social capital. Thompson (2002) sees the issue as perhaps one of emphasis, of social capital or social capital. Some of the common characteristics of social enterprise defined by Social Enterprise London (2006) are:

- *Enterprise Orientation*: they seek to be viable organisations with an operating surplus, versus traditional economic profit motives.
- *Social Aims*: they have explicit social aims such as job creation, training, or provision of local services. They have ethical values including a commitment to local capacity building, and they are accountable to their members and the wider community for their social environmental and economic impact.
- *Social ownership*: they are autonomous organisations with governance and ownership structures based on participation by stakeholders groups (for example, users, clients, local community groups) or by trustees. Profits are distributed as profit sharing to stakeholders or used for the benefit of the community.

The UK 's Countryside Agency (2003) found that, in comparison to urban social enterprises, rural social enterprises tend to be more focused upon community transport, agricultural cooperatives, community and sports centres, and heritage or environment related activities. They argue that the relatively dispersed nature of rural populations and failure of service provision in some ways creates a greater niche to which social enterprise may usefully respond (Byrne et al 2004, O'Toole and Burdess 2004).

The Overall Impacts of Events and Festivals

Festivals and special events may also be seen as types of social enterprise because they are rarely focused solely on profit maximisation but have a range of other goals. These may, explicitly or implicitly, include being important creators of social capital, as well as creating wider economic opportunities for local entrepreneurs, both general and tourism focused. This claim can be evidenced by the literature regarding the impacts of events and festivals where there continues to be controversy over what exactly constitutes the full extent of their costs and benefits (Carlesen, Getz and Soutar, 2000). Both Wood (2005), after considering related methods discussed in social science literature (Barnes et al., 2003; Chalmers, 2003; Sirgy and Cornwell, 2001; Thurston and Potvin, 2003), and Dwyer et al (2000) developed frameworks which incorporated a range of impacts from special events including 'tangible' impacts such as visitor expenditure and free publicity but also 'intangible' impacts which the authors suggested had too often been neglected in economic impact studies. Such impacts included community development or bringing the community together; social pride; opportunities for family fun; new customers; greater awareness of business; investment in the local area; good publicity and organisation funding. However, both authors balance the positives with a list of negatives including congestion; increased traffic; crime; strangers; disruption to lifestyles; noise; putting off regular customers; resident exodus and unmet business demand. Increasingly however the 'hidden value' of strengthened relations (trust, reciprocity) and improved interactions resulting from increased engagement between people have been identified as important success indicators, at least as a first step initiative (Reinicke and Deng, 2000; Mandell and Keast, 2007 forthcoming).

In attempting to map whether festivals can contribute to sustainable local economic development O' Sullivan and Jackson (2002) use an eight point index from UK environmental charity *Forum for the Future* to assess contribution. This includes capacity building and

training; community enterprise; access to credit and capital; local business development; sustainable approaches to inward investment; responsible business practice and access to, and distribution of, work; and, trading locally. The authors conclude that there is indeed a potential synergy between the Forum for the Future index and festivals and special events, and that some forms of festival make a more significant contribution than others. A number of researchers have also suggested that the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) method of evaluating contribution may also offer a viable way forward (Fredline et al, 2004; Hede et al, 2003; Sherwood et al, 2004). Delamere (1997) recognised the need for greater standardisation of methods and measures in relation to residents' attitudes to community run festivals, whilst Bramwell (1997) proposed an analytical framework that can be used to assess a range of event impacts related to sustainable development, namely, economic efficiency, social equity and environmental integrity, evaluated before, during and after the event. In addition to the range of economic, social and environmental issues to be evaluated, however, there are also issues related to the types of festival that exist. Getz (book chapter), for example, highlights a range of different types of festival and event, defined in terms of location, timing, and audience characteristics. By focusing on geography O'Sullivan and Jackson (2002) synthesise a range of these issues by classifying festivals as to population area targeted, organising groups, primary purpose and how it is organised, the amount and nature of resourcing, types of output sought, and nature of the evaluation. In the same vein, McDonnell et al (1999) highlight a typology they entitle "mega events" underlining the importance of understanding the diversity of festivals and special events in seeking to understand the contribution they make. What this brief examination of the literature indicates is that, particularly in rural areas, festivals and special events may play a multiple set of roles in development generally and for the tourism sector specifically. Consequently, there is a need to begin the process of evaluating this impact more fully.

Methodology

Impact studies in the UK (usually undertaken by local authorities) are often predictive and as policy focus quickly moves on after the event it is rare to find a detailed post hoc cost-benefit evaluation of an event (Jones, 2001). The importance of studying the longer-term effects of events is recognised, however, given that these effects will be felt by local people, whether or not they attended, and also by community groups and local businesses (Ritchie and Smith, 1991). Wood (2005) also highlights the range of methodological techniques that are employed. These include surveys, focus groups and observation (Watt, 1998; Bowdin et al., 2001; Getz, 1997) and even aerial photography to gain attendance rates (Raybould et al., 2000). Fredline and Faulkner (2000) used a three-part survey instrument to measure the positive and negative impacts of the event being studied, combined with further survey data to give a fuller picture of the local community's reactions to the event. Dwyer et al. (2000b) highlight the essential role of survey instruments in event/convention assessment and forecasting, but also argue that these methods have been neglected. These methods can also involve engagement with a variety of stakeholder groups, including non-attendees (Getz, 1997). Peters and Pikkemat (2002) have synthesised a framework which identifies the phases of evaluation - organization, conception, design, implementation, evaluation, and control phases, in their case, applied to the New Year's Eve event "Bergsilvester".

This literature review highlights the range of stakeholders, issues, methods and timescales to be considered in any methodology which seeks to examine the impact of festivals and events. The diverse nature of and purpose of festivals and the inherent costs as well as benefits of evaluation itself also need to be taken into account. These efforts are further complicated by the diverse and fragmented nature of festivals and special events, the wide spectrum of purposes for which festivals and special events are supported and the cost benefit ratio of evaluations.

As a preliminary first stage in the research process to evaluate fully the role and impact of FasPEs it was therefore decided to first focus on Welsh Unitary Authorities (UAs) themselves and their role in festival and event support, management and consequent requirements for evaluation. This work was undertaken using a structured interview schedule for all 22 UAs in Wales and the information was gathered in late 2006 and early 2007 via telephone interviews.

The fact that the whole sample of Welsh UAs was collected negated the issue of non-response bias or validity (for Wales) and also allows for the differences between rural and non-rural Welsh authorities to be examined. The results should therefore be seen in this context. To support the data gathered via these interviews, a range of economic data regarding each of the UAs was also gathered from secondary data sources (primarily using NOMIS) (regarding population, employment, self employment, SME concentration and tourism-related activities) to allow further examination of the issues. Specifically, answers to the following questions were sought :-

1. What is the nature of FaSPEs in Wales generally in terms of the numbers and types of events (classified into 4 types based on their focus of local-community based, major-regional, hallmark-national, and mega-international).
2. What is the level of overall UA engagement with each of these types of festival, and how does it differ in terms of resource input, reason for engagement (socio-cultural, economic, environmental and marketing), and importance to UA development plans.
3. How does rurality impact upon these issues both directly and also in terms of factors which are related to rurality (specifically income levels, tourism, economic activity, self-employment and tourism) and which may therefore provide underlying potential causes for differences between rural and non-rural areas.
4. What does this preliminary evaluation of FaSPEs indicate in terms of their potential role in social capital and enterprise activities and what is the nature of the research agenda consequently created, particularly in terms of the requirement from evaluation activities.

Results

In total, UAs in Wales are involved in nearly 1000 festivals and special events (FaSPE) per year the vast majority of which are local events targeted at mainly at local audiences and staged primarily for socio-cultural reasons linked to basic social-capital building activity. The results also indicate that there is a reduction in the total number of events as their size and scope increases. Conversely, the average level of resource input from councils increases with event size and scope. Table 2 demonstrates a marginal increase in levels of engagement with FaSPE management and a more significant increase in resource input as the size and scope of the event increases.

Table 3 clearly indicates that local community events driven by socio-cultural purpose is the strongest reason for UA involvement in local events, with economic purpose being most prominent for other types of FaSPE. However, hallmark events show the smallest difference between socio-cultural and economic reasons, indicating a more multi-dimensional focus. There also appears to be a strong relationship between the importance of economic reasons for UA involvement and its importance in the local development plan.

Table 2: Numbers, Engagement and Resource Input from UAs by Event Type

Festival/ Special Event Type	Number of UAs with this type of FaSPE (%)	Mean Level of Local Authority Engagement with FaSPE management (Average 1=low, 2 = medium, 3 = high)	Number Per Year Total	Mean Resource Input from UA (Average 1=minor, 2 = major, 3 = high)
Local / Community	22 (100%)	1.68	854	1.84
Major - Regional	12 (55%)	1.70	80	2.08
Hallmark- National	11 (50%)	1.81	34	2.14
Mega- International	2 (9%)	1.75	3	2.5
Total	22		971	

**Table 3: Means of Reasons for UA Involvement
(1= most important 4 = least, 5 = of no importance)**

Festival/ Special Event Type	Number with FaSPE in UA	Socio- Cultural	Economic	Physical / Environmental	Other (E.g. Marketing)	Appearance / Importance in Local Planning (Mean)
Local / Community	22	1.04 (1)	3 (2)	3.91 (3)	4.27 (4)	2.77
Major - Regional	12	2.17 (2)	1.33 (1)	4.25 (4)	4.17 (3)	3.5
Hallmark- National	11	2.09 (2)	1.64 (1)	3.09 (3)	3.27 (4)	3.18
Mega- International	2	3 (3)	1 (1)	2.5 (2)	4 (4)	4

Note : Figures in parentheses indicate ranking

The results for the stated purpose of the events themselves, however, reveal a slightly different pattern, where, socio-cultural and economic factors are more evenly spread in terms of importance. Indeed, for regional and national events, social reasons are at least as, or more, important than economic ones, highlighting the perception of direct economic benefit *and* social capital building potential of such activities. The greater focus from the UAs on economic benefits may in part be due to the financial restrictions councils find themselves under. It is possible, for example, that benefits to tourism are highlighted in order to help justify initial funding from UA resources which would otherwise simply be classified as leisure spending, the category which is often first to face public sector budget cuts in times of fiscal restraint as it is not mandatory spending.

Table 4: Purpose of Festivals and Events (Means where 1 = most important and 5 = of no importance)

Festival/Special Event Type	Number with Festival in UA	Socio-Cultural	Economic	Physical / Environmental	Other (e.g. Marketing)	Appearance / Importance in Local Development plan (Mean)
Local / Community	22	1.04 (1)	2.55 (2)	3.87 (3)	4 (4)	2.77
Major - Regional	12	1.58 (1)	1.58 (1)	3.91 (3)	4.33 (4)	3.5
Hallmark-National	11	1.81 (1)	2 (2)	3.64 (4)	3.45 (3)	3.18
Mega-International	2	3 (2)	1	3 (2)	3.5 (4)	4

Table 5 : Variables Against Economic Variables (Correlations)

	Local: Number	Major : Number	Hallmark: Number	Mega: Number	Local: Per head	Major: Per head	Hallmark: Per head	Mega : Per head
Population	-0.141	-0.048	0.083	0.617	-0.355	-0.197	-0.058	0.464
Gross Weekly Pay	-0.349	0.312	-0.129	0.104	-0.358	0.305	-0.155	0.106
Tourism-Related Employment	-0.058	0.043	0.196	0.729	-0.192	-0.089	0.101	0.53
Tourism-Related Employment %	0.257	0.070	0.243	-0.128	0.229	0.035	0.251	-0.182
Rural v. Non-Rural	0.323	0.297	0.238	-0.248	0.292	0.308	0.264	-0.262
Economic Activity	-0.202	0.181	0.039	0.010	-0.298	0.196	0.046	0.096
Self-Employment	0.456	0.146	0.292	-0.156	0.362	0.138	0.294	-0.172
Unemployment	-0.130	-0.120	-0.208	0.193	0.016	-0.059	-0.182	0.230

Table 5 indicates that economic activity is also negatively correlated with local festivals, reinforcing their role as for social reasons. There is also some, relatively weak, evidence of a correlation between the number of festivals of different types and more tourist-dependent areas. This is, however, strongest for local community festivals (0.257), which are not themselves focused on tourist attraction, as well as hallmark events (0.243), suggesting that festivals are not, generally, being explicitly focused upon for tourism-related outcomes.

Interestingly, self-employment is very strongly linked to local festivals in particular (and the first 3 types of festivals more generally) Rurality is also strongly positively correlated with the first 3 types of festival, as well as being strongly correlated with self-employment itself, reinforcing the strong role of self employment in the rural Welsh economy highlighted by Table 1. In order to further examine the issues for rural areas, these were compared with the more urban areas of Wales, the results shown in the tables below.

Table 6: Economic Variables: Comparison of Means for Rural and Non Rural Unitary Authorities

Variable	Non-Rural UA	Rural UA
<i>Economic Variables :</i>		
Population (000)	151600	109722
Working Age Population	93030 (61.4% of population)	63755 (58.1% of population)
Economic Activity (%)	74.0	76.4
Unemployment (%)	6.1	4.0
Self Employment (%)	6.3	12.0
Gross weekly pay (£)	416.2	389.2
Tourism related employment (Nos)	4615	4522
Tourism-related employment (%)	6.8	12.0

Reinforcing the results in table 1, table 6 indicates that Welsh rural areas have lower unemployment, higher self-employment, and a lower average wage. Importantly table 6 also highlights the importance of tourism with the average number of people employed in tourism in a rural and non-rural economy virtually the same, despite the much lower average rural UA population. Thus it can be seen that rural UAs have almost double the average tourism related employment as a percentage of total employment, highlighting the greatest importance of this sector to the rural economy in Wales.

Table 7: Festival-Related Variables: Comparison of Mean Numbers of Festivals per head and per UA

<i>Festival-Related Variables</i>	Non-Rural UA	Rural UA
Local Festivals (per UA)	26.8	56.1
Local Festivals (per head of population)	0.0002	0.0006
Major events (per UA)	2.2	5.8
Major events (per head of population)	0.0000	0.0001
Hallmark (per UA)	0.9231	2.44
Hallmark (per head of population)	0	0

As Table 7 shows, on average, rural areas have a larger number of all types of festivals and special events (excluding mega events, which only occur in two UAs in Wales), at least double the absolute average for non-rural areas, and this more than triples once relative populations are taken into account. Given this great difference between rural and non-rural areas, the question then becomes how and why do UAs utilise and support this activity in rural and non-rural areas.

Table 8: UA Engagement, Input and Reasons for Involvement (comparison of means)

<i>UA Engagement and Input</i>	Non-Rural UA	Rural UA
Local Community Festivals : Level of Local Authority Engagement	1.85	1.44
Local Community Festivals : Resource Input from Local Authority	2.03	1.56
Local Community Festivals : Socio Cultural Reason for L.A. Involvement	1.0	1.11
Local Community Festivals : Economic Reason for L.A. Involvement	3.46	2.33
Local Community Festivals : Physical Environmental Reason for L.A. Involvement	4.15	3.56
Local Community Festivals : Other Reason for L.A. Involvement	4.38	4.11
Local Community Festivals : Socio-Cultural Reason for Overall purpose	1.00	1.11
Local Community Festivals : Economic Reason for Overall purpose	2.92	2.00
Local Community Festivals : Physical Environmental Reason for Overall purpose	3.69	4.11
Local Community Festivals : Other Reason for Overall purpose	4.23	3.67
Local Community Festivals : Appear in Development Plan	2.84	2.67
Major Festivals/Events : Level of Local Authority Engagement	2.25	1.17
Major EventsFestivals : Resource Input from Local Authority	2.5	1.7
Major EventsFestivals : Socio-Cultural Reason for L.A. Involvement	2.17	2.17
Major EventsFestivals : Economic Reason for L.A. Involvement	1.5	1.17
Major EventsFestivals : Physical Environmental Reason for L.A. Involvement	4.17	4.33
Major EventsFestivals : Other Reason for L.A. Involvement	4.33	4.0
Major EventsFestivals : Socio-Cultural Reason for Overall purpose	1.5	1.67
Major EventsFestivals : Economic Reason for Overall purpose	1.83	1.33
Major EventsFestivals : Physical Environmental Reason for Overall purpose	3.83	4.00
Major EventsFestivals : Other Reason for Overall purpose	4	3.5
Major EventsFestivals : Appear in Development Plan	3.5	3.5
HallmarkFestivals : Level of Local Authority Engagement	2.17	1.4
HallmarkFestivals : Resource Input from Local Authority	2.4	1.8
HallmarkFestivals : Socio-Cultural Reason for L.A. Involvement	2.33	1.8
HallmarkFestivals : Economic Reason for L.A. Involvement	1.83	1.40
HallmarkFestivals : Physical Environmental Reason for L.A. Involvement	2.83	3.40
HallmarkFestivals : Other Reason for L.A. Involvement	3	3.6
HallmarkFestivals : Socio-Cultural Reason for Overall purpose	2.00	1.60
HallmarkFestivals : Economic Reason for Overall purpose	2.17	1.80
HallmarkFestivals : Physical Environmental Reason for Overall purpose	3.5	3.8
HallmarkFestivals : Other Reason for Overall purpose	3	4
HallmarkFestivals : Appear in Development Plan	3.5	2.8

Table 8 highlights a strange dichotomy. On the one hand Rural UAs commit fewer resources to festivals and events and are less engaged with them than non-rural areas. On the other hand rural areas, perhaps unsurprisingly, consistently find festivals in which they participate of more economic importance than non-rural areas, and the purpose of the events themselves is also consistently more focused on economic outcomes, reinforcing their economic importance in rural areas. There is no real difference between urban and rural areas with regard to the socio-cultural importance of local festivals and special events, both finding them equally and highly important (and of more importance than the economic reasons in most cases), though hallmark events in rural areas do seem to be of a higher socio-cultural importance. Broadly, this suggests, therefore, that rural festivals and special events are of higher relative importance

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economically, and are seen as equally important socio-culturally as for urban areas. Given the greater relative difficulties in building social and network capital in rural areas highlighted in the literature, this is an important initial finding, which may be reinforced by the smaller average resource and engagement to them from rural UAs, which is likely to necessitate increased activity from the local communities themselves. Combining the economic and socio-cultural importance of these festivals and events in rural areas, along with the greater importance of small business generally and tourism in particular, may suggest therefore that social and network capital building for both social and economic benefit, as both an area for further investigation, and also encouragement.

Conclusions

There appears to be a paradox of rurality here, in that the more tourism-reliant, mainly rural, areas have UAs investing fewer resources into, and with less engagement in, festivals and special events. As there is only a weak relationship with an economic reason for UA engagement for any of the festival types, one could conclude that this not seen as a strong part of the UAs' tourist strategies, and in support of this conclusion they are less likely to appear in UA development plan. Self employment is, however, strongly related to festivals, particularly local and major (regional) ones but UA involvement is lower in such areas. This suggests a need to examine further how these events are being supported, how social capital is created and leveraged, and particularly the extent to, and ways in which, local enterprises are involved.

For rural UAs in particular, however, there appears to be a strong focus on obtaining economic as well as socio-cultural benefits from the events, but with relatively small UA resource and management input. Overall, therefore, this may suggest a lost opportunity for rural areas in terms of utilising UA resources to increase the benefits of festivals and events from both broad economic and specific social and networking capital building perspectives. More in-depth research on the links between enterprise, entrepreneurship and local community focused festivals and special events could usefully be explored with a view to understanding how they might be a vehicle for vital social capital building which underpins the economic health of localities. What this exploratory approach has revealed is that investigations into festival and special event organiser activities, sponsors and local SMEs may provide a deeper understanding of what is being achieved and of what potential might exist for festivals and special events and their localities. It may be that the considerable potential of festivals and special events could be more effectively fulfilled

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